

DAILY **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE**Friday, 24 Oct, 2025****Edition : International Table of Contents**

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The U.S. has imposed sanctions on Russia's two largest oil companies, Rosneft and Lukoil, citing their role in funding the Kremlin's war in Ukraine. President Trump stated that India has agreed to significantly reduce Russian oil imports by the end of the year. Indian refiners, including Reliance Industries, are now preparing to recalibrate their oil procurement in line with U.S. sanctions and government guidelines, highlighting the intersection of energy diplomacy, strategic autonomy, and global economic pressures.

U.S. sanctions Russian oil; Indian refineries poised to cut imports

Rosneft and Lukoil hit with sanctions for 'funding Kremlin's war machine', pushing global oil prices up 3%; Trump says India will cut down imports to 'almost nothing' by the year-end; Indian firms are 'recalibrating' to align with new govt. guidelines

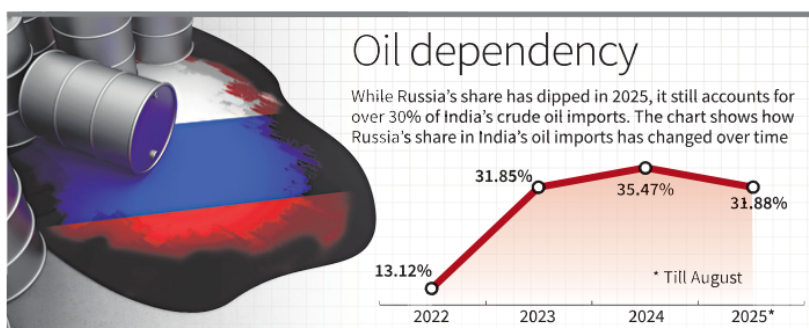
Reuters

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI

U.S. President Donald Trump hit Russia's two biggest oil companies with sanctions in his latest policy shift on Moscow's war in Ukraine, prompting global oil prices to rise by 3% on Thursday.

Mr. Trump also reiterated his claim that India has agreed to "stop" buying oil from Russia and would bring its oil purchases down to "almost nothing" by the end of the year, and said he would persuade China to do the same. India and China are the two biggest buyers of Russian oil.

Indian refiners – including Reliance, the top Indian buyer of Russian crude – are poised to sharply curtail imports of Russian oil to comply with the new U.S. sanctions, industry sources said on Thursday.



India, as you know, has told me they are going to stop [buying Russian oil]... It's a process. You can't just stop... By the end of the year, they'll be down to almost nothing

DONALD TRUMP, U.S. President



The U.S. sanctions target oil giants Rosneft and Lukoil, which between them account for more than 5% of global oil output.

'Funding war'

The U.S. Treasury has given companies until November 21 to wind down their transactions with the

Russian oil producers.

"Given [Russian] President [Vladimir] Putin's refusal to end this senseless war, Treasury is sanctioning Russia's two largest oil companies that fund the Kremlin's war machine," U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement.

"We encourage our al-

lies to join us in and adhere to these sanctions."

Oil and gas revenue, currently down 21% year-on-year, accounts for a quarter of Russia's budget and is the most important source of funding for its war in Ukraine, now in its fourth year.

Mr. Trump expressed confidence regarding In-

dia's response to the sanctions. "India, as you know, has told me they are going to stop [buying Russian oil]... It's a process. You can't just stop... By the end of the year, they'll be down to almost nothing, almost 40% of the oil. India, they've been great. Spoke to Prime Minister [Narendra] Modi yesterday. They have been absolutely great," the U.S. President told the reporters at the White House on Wednesday.

Reliance Industries, which operates the world's biggest refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat, has a long-term deal to buy nearly 500,000 barrels per day of crude from Rosneft and also buys Russian oil from intermediaries.

It now plans to reduce or cease imports of Russian oil, including halting purchases under its deal with Rosneft, people familiar with the matter said.

Issue Overview

Aspect	Detail
Core Concern	U.S. sanctions on Russian oil and pressure on India to cut imports, raising questions about India's energy strategy and compliance with international directives.
Geopolitical Context	Amid the Ukraine war and global energy market volatility, the U.S. is leveraging sanctions to curb funding for Russia while influencing India and China, major buyers of Russian crude.
India's Stand	India aims to balance compliance with new guidelines while ensuring energy security and strategic autonomy. Refiners are "recalibrating" imports.
U.S. Stand	Targeting Rosneft and Lukoil to pressure Russia financially; pushing India and China to reduce dependence on Russian oil.
Underlying Issue	Managing global energy diplomacy while preserving national interests amid geopolitical pressure.

Key Observations

- **Sanctions Impact:** Targeting Rosneft and Lukoil, which produce over 5% of global oil, immediately pushed prices up by 3%.
- **Energy Security Pressure:** India, heavily reliant on Russian oil (Reliance buys ~500,000 barrels/day), faces challenges in securing alternative supplies.
- **Diplomatic Signaling:** Trump's public comments suggest a mix of pressure and praise for India, framing compliance as a cooperative gesture.
- **Implementation Timeline:** U.S. Treasury has mandated companies to wind down transactions by November 21, indicating a strict compliance deadline.
- **Global Market Dynamics:** Cuts in Russian oil exports affect not only India but the entire energy market, influencing prices and strategic energy decisions worldwide.

Static and Current Linkages

Static Topic	Current Relevance
India–Russia Energy Ties	India's long-term deals with Rosneft are affected, requiring alternative sourcing.
India–U.S. Strategic Relations	Sanctions testing India's alignment with U.S. diplomatic pressure versus its strategic autonomy.

Static Topic	Current Relevance
Global Oil Market	Price fluctuations impact economic planning and inflation in India.
Ukraine War	Energy sanctions are a key tool in limiting Russia's war funding.
Energy Diplomacy	India's recalibration reflects balancing act between domestic energy needs and international obligations.

Analytical Perspective

- **Strategic Autonomy vs. Compliance:** India must reconcile reliance on Russian crude with pressure from a strategic partner, the U.S.
- **Energy Market Leverage:** The U.S. uses sanctions as both moral and economic leverage in the geopolitical landscape.
- **Domestic Industrial Implications:** Major refineries like Reliance need operational adjustments, affecting supply chains and pricing.
- **Public Diplomacy:** U.S. framing India as "cooperative" signals to both domestic and global audiences, while India maintains restrained messaging.
- **Global Optics:** India's measured response underscores careful messaging to avoid appearing subservient, balancing partnership with independent policy.

Solutions and Policy Significance

- **Diversified Energy Sourcing:** India should accelerate alternative oil imports from the Middle East, Africa, or domestic sources.
- **Strategic Communication:** Maintain clear messaging on India's autonomy in energy procurement while complying with new guidelines.
- **Energy Efficiency Measures:** Promote domestic refinery efficiency and alternative energy solutions to reduce dependency on any single source.
- **Negotiation with U.S.:** Use diplomatic channels to clarify timelines and flexibility in reducing Russian oil imports.
- **Market Stabilization:** Monitor domestic fuel prices and buffer against global oil price spikes due to sanctions.

Strategic & Societal Implications

Aspect	Implication
India-U.S. Strategic Trust	Compliance with sanctions can strengthen partnership but risks appearing externally pressured.

Aspect	Implication
Energy Security	Rapid reduction of Russian oil imports may stress supply and increase domestic costs.
Trade & Industrial Impact	Refinery operations, imports, and pricing strategies may face short-term disruptions.
Global Diplomacy	Signals India's stance on Ukraine conflict and alignment in international sanctions regime.
Public Perception	Balanced messaging essential to maintain credibility domestically and internationally.

Challenges Ahead

- Managing energy security while reducing Russian crude imports under strict timelines.
- Minimizing economic impact of rising global oil prices.
- Preserving strategic autonomy while appearing cooperative with U.S. sanctions.
- Adjusting refinery operations and long-term contracts to new sourcing realities.
- **Coordinating domestic and international messaging to avoid mixed signals.**

Conclusion

The U.S. sanctions on Russian oil highlight the delicate balance India must maintain between strategic autonomy, energy security, and international diplomatic pressure. While President Trump publicly frames India as cooperative, the operational and geopolitical realities demand careful recalibration of energy imports. India's response will test its ability to navigate energy diplomacy, uphold national interests, and maintain strong strategic ties with the U.S., all while ensuring stability in domestic fuel supply and global perception.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: Examine the implications of U.S. sanctions on Russian oil for India's energy security and strategic autonomy. **(150 Words)**

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, has approved capital acquisition proposals worth around ₹79,000 crore for the Army, Navy, and Air Force. These acquisitions aim to enhance lethality, mobility, and intelligence-gathering capabilities while strengthening India's self-reliance in defence under the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.

Tri-services to get systems, platforms for ₹79,000 cr.

The acquisitions are designed to enhance lethality, mobility and intelligence-gathering capabilities across the services; Defence Acquisition Council, chaired by Rajnath, approves the proposals

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on Thursday approved a series of capital acquisition proposals worth around ₹79,000 crore aimed at strengthening the operational capabilities of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

The Defence Ministry said the approvals granted during a meeting at South Block would cover a wide spectrum of platforms and systems designed to enhance lethality, mobility, and intelligence-gathering capabilities across the Services.

For the Army, the DAC accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for the procurement of the Nag missile system (tracked) Mk-II (NAMIS), ground-based mobile ELINT System (GBMES), and high-mobility vehicles (HMs) with material handling cranes.

The NAMIS (Tracked) will bolster the Army's ability to destroy enemy armoured vehicles, bunkers,



The Anti Tank Guided Missile Nag Mk II being successfully tested from a light tank developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation. PTI

and other fortified positions, while the GBMES will provide round-the-clock electronic intelligence on enemy emitters. The induction of HMs is expected to significantly enhance logistic support in challenging terrains.

For the Navy, the AoN was granted for the acquisition of landing platform docks (LPDs), 30 mm naval surface guns, advanced light weight torpedoes (ALWTs), electro-optical infrared search-and-track systems, and smart ammunition for 76 mm super rapid gun mounts.

The LPDs will augment the Navy's amphibious warfare capabilities and enable it to undertake joint operations with the Army and Air Force. They will also enhance India's capacity to conduct peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief (HADR) missions. The indigenously developed ALWT by the DRDO's Naval Science and Technological Laboratory is capable of engaging conventional, nuclear, and midget submarines.

For the Indian Air Force, the AoN was accorded for

the collaborative long-range target saturation/destruction system (CLRTS/DS) and other related systems. The CLRTS/DS features autonomous take-off and landing, navigation, target detection and payload delivery capabilities, aimed at augmenting the IAF's long-range precision engagement capacity.

The approvals reflect the government's continuing emphasis on modernisation, self-reliance and indigenisation under the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative, officials said.

Issue Overview

Aspect	Detail
Core Concern	Strengthening tri-services operational capabilities through modernization and indigenous systems.
Geopolitical Context	Amid rising regional security challenges, including border tensions with China and Pakistan, and the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific, India is focusing on modernizing its armed forces.

Aspect	Detail
India’s Stand	Emphasis on indigenization, operational readiness, and self-reliance in defence manufacturing.
Underlying Issue	Balancing capability enhancement with strategic autonomy, technological innovation, and defence preparedness.

Key Observations

- **Army Modernisation:** Acquisition of Nag Mk-II missile (tracked) enhances anti-tank capability; GBMES strengthens electronic intelligence; HMTVs improve logistics in challenging terrains.
- **Navy Capabilities:** Landing Platform Docks (LPDs) bolster amphibious operations; 30 mm naval guns and ALWT torpedoes enhance maritime strike and anti-submarine warfare; smart ammunition and EO/IR systems improve targeting and surveillance.
- **Air Force Modernisation:** CLRTS/DS provides long-range autonomous target destruction, boosting precision engagement capability.
- **Indigenisation & Self-Reliance:** Majority of systems, like ALWT and Nag Mk-II, are DRDO-developed, aligning with Aatmanirbhar Bharat.
- **Joint Operations & HADR:** Enhancements in Navy and Army platforms enable integrated operations and disaster response missions.

Static and Current Linkages

Static Topic	Current Relevance
India’s Defence Modernisation	Strengthening combat readiness across tri-services.
Aatmanirbhar Bharat	Promoting indigenous defence production and reducing import dependency.
Indo-Pacific Security	Enhances India’s maritime and aerial capabilities amid China’s regional assertiveness.
Joint Operations	Facilitates interoperability among Army, Navy, and Air Force.
Defence R&D	Boosts DRDO’s technological capacity and innovation ecosystem.

Analytical Perspective

- **Strategic Autonomy:** Focus on indigenously developed systems reduces dependence on foreign suppliers and preserves operational independence.
- **Force Modernisation:** Acquisition addresses capability gaps in anti-tank, intelligence, naval strike, amphibious, and long-range precision operations.
- **Integrated Defence Approach:** Emphasizes jointness among services, improving coordinated response in conventional and humanitarian operations.
- **Geopolitical Signaling:** Demonstrates India’s resolve to maintain credible deterrence amid regional security challenges.
- **Economic & Industrial Impact:** Boosts domestic defence manufacturing, employment, and technology ecosystem under Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Solutions and Policy Significance

- **Consistent Modernisation Roadmap:** Ensure phased procurement and induction to maintain operational readiness.
- **R&D Collaboration:** Strengthen public-private partnerships in defence R&D for sustainable self-reliance.
- **Force Integration:** Regular joint exercises to enhance interoperability of new platforms.
- **Balanced Capability Build-up:** Continue acquiring systems that cover conventional warfare, cyber/electronic domains, and HADR operations.
- **Export Potential:** Promote indigenously developed systems for defence exports to enhance strategic and economic leverage.

Strategic & Societal Implications

Aspect	Implication
National Security	Enhances deterrence against conventional and hybrid threats.
Regional Stability	Strengthens India’s strategic posture in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia.
Defence Economy	Encourages domestic defence industry and technological innovation.
Disaster Response	Enhanced HADR capabilities through LPDs and joint operations.
Technology Development	Advances indigenous missile, torpedo, and electronic warfare systems.

Challenges Ahead

- Timely induction and integration of systems into operational service.
- Maintaining cost-effectiveness while ensuring cutting-edge capability.
- Sustaining indigenous R&D momentum amid global technological competition.
- Inter-service coordination to maximize the utility of multi-domain platforms.
- Strategic management of sensitive technology transfer and export controls.

Conclusion

The DAC approvals signal India's commitment to modernising its armed forces, enhancing self-reliance, and strengthening joint operational capabilities. By integrating advanced indigenous platforms across Army, Navy, and Air Force, India bolsters its deterrence, strategic autonomy, and regional influence. However, careful management of procurement, induction, and R&D will be essential to translate these acquisitions into effective operational capability.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: The acronym GBMES, recently approved for the Indian Army, stands for:

- a) Ground-Based Missile Engagement System
- b) Ground-Based Mobile ELINT System
- c) Guided Ballistic Missile Early System
- d) Ground-Based Military Electronic System

Ans:b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: Evaluate the challenges and implications of relying on indigenous defence R&D under the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' policy while addressing evolving regional security threats.

Page 06 : GS 2 : International Relations / Prelims

India and Bhutan held the 14th Border Management and Security meeting in Thimphu (16–17 October) to review bilateral security cooperation, border management, and capacity-building measures. The meeting reflects ongoing efforts to maintain a secure and stable border, strengthen bilateral ties, and enhance regional security.

Issue Overview

Aspect	Detail
Core Concern	Strengthening India-Bhutan border management and security cooperation.
Geopolitical Context	India shares a 699-km border with Bhutan across Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh; the region holds strategic importance given proximity to China and the northeastern frontier.
India's Stand	Focus on integrated check posts, cross-border movement management, mobile signal spillover, and capacity building for Bhutan's police.
Bhutan's Stand	Willingness to enhance border infrastructure, law enforcement capacity, and collaborative security mechanisms.
Underlying Issue	Balancing sovereignty, regional stability, and people-to-people cooperation while managing traditional and emerging security challenges.

India, Bhutan review security cooperation, border management

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India and Bhutan reviewed border management and security in a meeting held at Thimphu from October 16-17, a statement by the Union Home Ministry said on Thursday.

The Ministry said the two countries had reviewed bilateral security cooperation and border management issues, including mobile signal spillover, future road map for integrated check posts, maintenance of boundary pillars, and cross-border movement.

Discussions covered capacity building for Bhutan's police. The delegations expressed satisfaction at the cordial and constructive discussions and reiterated their resolve to work together for a safe, secure and prosperous border, the Ministry said.

nistry said. This was the 14th India-Bhutan Border Management and Security meeting. The last meeting was held in 2019.

The Indian delegation was led by Rajendra Kumar, Secretary, Department of Border Management, Home Ministry, while the Bhutanese side was headed by Sonam Wangyel, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs.

India shares a 699-km border with Bhutan, running along the States of Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. "Reaffirming their strong friendship, India and Bhutan committed to deepening cooperation across traditional and emerging areas... Their enduring partnership, rooted in shared geography, culture, and people-to-people ties, continues to serve as a model for regional cooperation," the Ministry said.

Key Observations

- **Border Management:** Review of boundary pillars maintenance and integrated check posts indicates attention to both physical and administrative border infrastructure.
- **Cross-Border Security:** Discussions on mobile signal spillover and coordinated policing reflect modern security concerns.
- **Capacity Building:** India supports Bhutan in strengthening police training and infrastructure.
- **Cordial Relations:** The meeting emphasizes the long-standing, friendly bilateral relationship rooted in geography, culture, and people-to-people ties.
- **Continuity & Institutionalisation:** The meeting, being the 14th, demonstrates sustained institutional engagement since 2019.

Static and Current Linkages

Static Topic	Current Relevance
India-Bhutan Strategic Partnership	Reinforces long-term security and diplomatic cooperation.
Border Infrastructure	Enhances regional security and trade facilitation.
Capacity Building	Supports Bhutan's internal security capabilities, fostering mutual trust.
Regional Security	Serves as a stabilising factor in the eastern Himalayan region amid China's proximity.
People-to-People Ties	Maintains strong bilateral goodwill and local border cooperation.

Analytical Perspective

- **Strategic Significance:** India's engagement strengthens its influence in Bhutan and the broader eastern Himalayan region, countering potential external pressures.
- **Collaborative Security Model:** Joint review meetings provide a platform for proactive management of emerging security challenges.
- **Infrastructure & Modernisation:** Integrated check posts and boundary maintenance enhance border governance.
- **Regional Stability:** Cooperation with Bhutan serves as a stabilising factor along India's sensitive northeastern frontier.
- **Soft Power Diplomacy:** Capacity building and technical support underline India's role as a trusted regional partner.

Solutions and Policy Significance

- **Institutionalised Engagement:** Regular border meetings to address evolving security challenges.
- **Technological Upgradation:** Modern surveillance, monitoring, and communication tools for both nations.
- **Capacity Development:** Continued police training, intelligence sharing, and joint exercises.
- **Integrated Border Management:** Strengthening check posts, signage, and digital monitoring for efficient cross-border flow.
- **People-Centric Approach:** Ensuring border communities benefit from infrastructure and security measures.

Strategic & Societal Implications

Aspect	Implication
National Security	Secures a strategically vital 699-km frontier.
Bilateral Relations	Reinforces trust and cooperation with Bhutan.
Regional Stability	Contributes to stability in the eastern Himalayas.
Border Governance	Modernised infrastructure supports trade and mobility while maintaining security.
Humanitarian & Social Impact	Positive engagement with border communities strengthens local development and peace.

Challenges Ahead

- Balancing security imperatives with local population mobility and trade.
- Managing technological challenges like mobile signal spillover in hilly terrains.
- Addressing any emerging threats along the border, including transnational crime.
- Sustaining institutional memory and follow-up from periodic meetings.
- Integrating new infrastructure and capacity-building initiatives efficiently.

Conclusion

The India-Bhutan border management meeting underscores the enduring strategic partnership between the two nations. By focusing on border infrastructure, capacity building, and cross-border security cooperation, India and Bhutan enhance regional stability, safeguard national security, and model effective bilateral engagement. Sustained institutionalised collaboration ensures both nations remain prepared to manage traditional and emerging challenges along a sensitive frontier.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: Which of the following systems were recently approved for the Indian Army?

1. Nag Mk-II missile system
2. Ground-based Mobile ELINT System (GBMES)
3. High-Mobility Vehicles (HMTVs)
4. BrahMos cruise missile

Select the correct answer:

- (a) 1, 2, 3
- (b) 1 and 4 only
- (c) 2, 3 and 4
- (d) All of the above

Ans : a)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques. In the context of India-Bhutan security cooperation, analyse how infrastructure development, capacity building, and cross-border management can act as instruments of soft power and strategic influence. **(250 Words)**

The Tamil Nadu government has proposed amendments to the Tamil Nadu Factories Rules, 1950, allowing women to be employed in around 20 jobs previously classified as hazardous or dangerous. Pregnant women and young persons remain barred, while consent for night shifts is now mandatory. This move reflects incremental reform aimed at gender equality and workplace inclusivity.

Issue Overview

Aspect	Detail
Core Concern	Legal barriers restricting women from hazardous industrial work and night shifts.
Socio-Economic Context	Persistent gender-based occupational segregation reinforced by patriarchal norms; limited women participation in hazardous jobs affects economic empowerment.
India's Stand	Progressive labour policy shift permitting women in previously restricted roles, while ensuring safety and consent.
Underlying Issue	Balancing gender equality, occupational safety, and workers' rights.

Key Observations

- **Legal Reform:** Women can now work in industries such as glass manufacturing, lead processing, petroleum, fireworks, pesticide handling, and high-noise operations.
- **Consent and Safety:** Written consent for night shifts and exclusion of pregnant women ensures safety and autonomy.
- **Incremental Approach:** The amendments build on earlier reforms, like permitting night shifts, reflecting a gradual dismantling of patriarchal restrictions.

Good job

Factories must provide facilities for women employed in hazardous jobs

Small, incremental steps are what set a fly-wheel in motion. As far as labour laws go, the Tamil Nadu government's proposal to allow women to be employed in about 20 operations listed as 'dangerous', and from which they were prohibited from being employed in so far, is progressive. The government has proposed amendments to the Tamil Nadu Factories Rules, 1950, to allow women to take up even jobs titled hazardous or dangerous, when these Rules come into practice; only pregnant women and young persons will be barred from these jobs. Earlier, the government had amended the Rules to allow women to be deployed on the night shift in factories, changing the historic practice of keeping them out. In this recent amendment, which was hosted in the public realm for feedback in September, factories are also required to get the woman's consent in writing for the night shift. These are changes that have come literally, rule by rule, but in effect, the government has shrugged off its patriarchal stance here, freeing up women from the perception that they are vulnerable and weak and will have to be protected by the State. The operations which are set to be opened for women include electrolytic process, glass manufacture, manufacture and treatment of lead, generation of gas and petroleum, blasting, liming and tanning of raw hides and skins, graphite powdering, manufacture of dichromates and carcinogenic dye intermediates, fireworks and match factories, manufacture of manganese, dangerous pesticides, use of benzene, and operations involving high noise and vibration levels.

Removing legal barriers is the first step toward implementing progressive measures that will facilitate more equitable workplaces. However crucial this first step is in rectifying age-old patriarchy-reinforced assigned gender roles in society and industry, it is not enough. This should be followed up by provision of adequate amenities and facilities for women, including separate toilets, changing rooms, and closed areas for conducting medical checks which are mandated for such industries, besides drop home facilities in places that have hitherto had no women workers at all. This will clearly require some investment, close involvement of the management, and at least initially, active monitoring by State labour authorities. The government must also take care to ensure that women who are in circumstances that might not enable their participation in these jobs are not forced into them, or penalised for not opting for these tasks. Without this being set in place, any progressive measure to dismantle the barriers that keep Indian society from being a more equitable job market will turn out to be a damp squib.

- **Facilities Requirement:** The law emphasizes the need for separate toilets, changing rooms, medical facilities, and safe transport.
- **Implementation Challenges:** Active monitoring and investment from factory management and labour authorities are critical for effectiveness.

Static and Current Linkages

Static Topic	Current Relevance
Women's Labour Rights	Aligns with constitutional guarantees of gender equality (Articles 14, 15, 21).
Occupational Safety	Addresses health hazards in hazardous industries for women.
Gender-Inclusive Economic Participation	Expands opportunities in previously male-dominated sectors.
Labour Law Reform	Example of modernising state-level labour regulations.
Social Equity	Helps dismantle patriarchal societal norms in workplace practices.

Analytical Perspective

- **Gender Equality:** Removing legal barriers enhances women's access to diverse employment opportunities.
- **Occupational Safety & Autonomy:** Written consent and exclusion of vulnerable categories ensure protection without curtailing rights.
- **Incremental Policy Approach:** Small, phased reforms are effective in challenging entrenched socio-cultural biases.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Greater inclusion of women in high-paying or strategic industrial sectors boosts their financial independence.
- **State Responsibility:** Requires proactive monitoring, investment, and capacity-building to translate policy into real workplace equality.

Solutions and Policy Significance

- **Adequate Facilities:** Factories must provide toilets, changing rooms, medical check areas, and transport facilities.
- **Monitoring Mechanisms:** State labour authorities need to supervise compliance actively.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Ensure women are not coerced and have the freedom to opt-out safely.

- **Awareness and Training:** Educate management and workforce about gender-sensitive workplace policies.
- **Gradual Expansion:** Use pilot implementation in select industries before scaling nationwide.

Strategic & Societal Implications

Aspect	Implication
Women’s Empowerment	Promotes gender parity in industrial employment.
Social Reform	Challenges patriarchal norms and occupational gender stereotyping.
Labour Market Inclusivity	Expands skilled workforce in hazardous sectors.
Economic Growth	Utilising full workforce potential can boost industrial productivity.
Occupational Health	Safe facilities reduce health risks for women employees.

Challenges Ahead

- Ensuring compliance across all factories, particularly small-scale units.
- Providing necessary infrastructure and investment in hazardous workplaces.
- Balancing safety with increased access to work.
- Avoiding tokenistic inclusion without genuine workplace equity.
- Managing societal resistance or traditional biases against women in hazardous roles.

Conclusion

The Tamil Nadu amendment represents a progressive step toward gender-inclusive labour policies, dismantling patriarchal restrictions and enabling women’s participation in hazardous industries. Its success depends on adequate infrastructure, monitoring, voluntary participation, and societal acceptance. This policy can serve as a model for other states to reform occupational gender restrictions while promoting safety, equity, and economic empowerment.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques : Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the Tamil Nadu Factories Rules amendment proposed in 2025?

1. Women are allowed to work in hazardous jobs such as lead processing, fireworks, and pesticide handling.
2. Pregnant women and young persons remain barred from hazardous jobs.
3. Factories are required to obtain women workers' written consent for night shifts.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: d)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: Examine the challenges and policy measures required to ensure effective implementation of gender-inclusive labour reforms in industrial workplaces. **(150 Words)**

Ahead of COP30 in Brazil, India is positioned to update its climate commitments and present a National Adaptation Plan. With developed countries showing reluctance to take leadership, there is debate on whether India should assume a more prominent global role in climate action. The discussion focuses on mitigation, adaptation, finance, and the integration of development and strategic interests in climate policy.

Should India take global leadership on climate change?



Hisham Mundol

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PARLEY

Ahead of Conference of the Parties (COP)30 in November in Belém, Brazil, global headwinds have left many developed countries in the West increasingly reluctant to take on the mantle of climate leadership. India, like other countries, is expected to update climate commitments and present an adaptation plan. Should India take global leadership on climate change? Hisham Mundol and Ulka Kelkar discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Jacob Koshy. Edited excerpts:

This seems to be a very unusual lead-up to a COP. The U.S. has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement, the European Union is reluctant to assume leadership on climate, and Brazil, which is hosting COP30, appears only to be stressing on implementation. Are we heading towards a washout?

Hisham Mundol: I am by nature a 'glass half full' person. Before most COPs, there is often a lack of direction. We live in particularly turbulent geopolitical times and I imagine we may not get sweeping new outcomes like we did in 2015, with the Paris Agreement. Despite the U.S.'s exit (from the Paris Agreement), I see the emergence of an 'Axis of Good' – a number of countries working with one another consistently on climate change. We're seeing Europeans and Indians working on climate technology. I wouldn't be surprised if Brazil and India work on areas where there is common ground, such as forests. India has never been the most glamorous player on international climate negotiations, but it has something far more valuable than glamour, and that is a steady hand. Climate change is not a politically divisive issue in India. We have made commitments and are working towards them. Finally, an 'implementation COP' may not sound ambitious but it we manage to implement the promises already made, that would be real progress.

Ulka Kelkar: First, I expect that this COP will emphasise the need for finance for climate adaptation and not just for (mitigation) actions where there is already private sector revenue. So, not just (finance for) solar power or electric vehicles, but also for adaptation to potential climate impacts in sectors such as agriculture and water resources.

Second, the emphasis on implementation means that developing countries like ours need to create a pipeline of projects that we can invest in – not just sectors but specific projects.

And third, this big number of \$1.3 trillion (an



A man rides a motorcycle along the solar panels in Gujarat Solar Park in Patan district, Gujarat. REUTERS

annual figure that must be raised by 2035 as climate finance) should feature in the title of the 'Baku to Belém' road map that will come up for discussion at this COP. This road map should include the entire financial system – not just public finance, but also the private sector, multilateral development banks, and philanthropies – to discuss how the finance flows can become greener.

Isn't implementation something that countries ought to be doing locally? Why do we need a COP for that?

UK: Many COPs end up reaching a point where there is a near-breakdown of negotiations and attempts are made to salvage it in the last minute. But that drama aside, the process continues and each COP is an incremental development over the previous one.

Implementation cannot happen without discussing the means of implementation, which is primarily finance. It can also mean technology and skilling. We hope that there will be discussions on innovative new sources of finance that can be added to the pool of money required for adapting to and mitigating climate change. Once these discussions happen, on the means of implementation, countries can go back and implement (projects) on some practical basis. Otherwise, (implementation) is left to just how much public funding countries can raise domestically; and how much private investment businesses and banks can bring in based on profit considerations alone.

The scientific reality is that even official commitments by countries to cut carbon emissions are unlikely to reduce global emissions enough to keep them below the Paris Agreement target of a 2°C rise by 2100. This is partly because of the high costs



India has never been the most glamorous player on international climate negotiations, but it has something far more valuable than glamour, and that is a steady hand.

HISHAM MUNDOL

involved, as we had earlier discussed. How do we ensure that countries don't get stuck in a blame game, and instead evolve creative solutions regarding funding adaptations?

HM: International cooperation has worked best when driven not by largesse but by individual, national, strategic, and security interests. When the world responded to HIV/AIDS, it was because it realised that if large parts of sub-Saharan Africa were going to be ravaged by the epidemic, it would cause unrest. The cost of a security intervention is dramatically more than a developmental intervention. China is not building a green economy because it loves the environment, but because it realises that that this is the future. Big industrial conglomerates in India, such as the Adani Group and Reliance Group, are investing as much as they are in green energy because they see that there is shareholder value to be created. Consider carbon pricing: many countries are looking at establishing some form of carbon market (where individual reductions in carbon emissions can be traded for profit).

UK: Often, I think that the scale of the challenge for India is not always understood in the West and sometimes the opportunity that that scale offers is also not fully appreciated. So, one thing that has come out in the news recently is that for the first time, emissions from India's power sector have actually stopped growing because there is so much more renewable energy now in the electricity system. If you look at model projections for the future, you will see that even decades into the future, despite being a growing economy where houses have to be built, manufacturing jobs have to be created, and power has to be supplied for a variety of applications from transport to cooking, India's power sector emissions are actually not projected to grow. So, there is a kind of decoupling that has already happened between energy and emissions. The scale of this is not really always appreciated by those in the West.

On the adaptation side, the scale really matters. Innovative aggregated solutions, such as the PM-KUSUM scheme, which uses solar energy in the agriculture sector, or electric buses for public transport, can drive down costs

and make services and public goods cheaper. Second, we really need to actively look for projects where there are both adaptation and mitigation benefits. For example, projects that would not only help counter the impacts of heat or flood risks but also bring down emissions. An example would be cold-chain storage systems in agriculture that are solar powered.

Ahead of COP30, India, like other countries, is expected to submit updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). India is also expected to submit a National Adaptation Plan (NAP). According to you, how should these look?

HM: India already has an ambitious target of drawing 50% of its electricity mix from non-fossil sources by 2030. A lot of progress has happened on this front: renewables account for about half of the country's installed power capacity. Since green hydrogen production relies on renewable energy, explicitly codifying this link, such as by recognising renewable energy for green hydrogen, would be a good move. Even if such a move is incremental in terms of national commitments, incorporating it into the NDCs would send a signal of intent.

UK: The biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions is industry. This is a hard-to-abate sector because a lot of emissions come not from the use of energy where you can switch the fuel, but from process emissions. Unless you have a different way of making cement or a different way of making steel, it is going to be very difficult to change those process emissions. So, it might be time to consider as a long-term signal, some kind of new NDC target for the industry sector. It can mean bringing in more electrification, which itself can come from renewable or cleaner sources.

Second, we can look at ways of prioritising certain projects. Sometime ago, India had come up a list of projects where it would be willing to participate in the international carbon market. It said, for example, we don't want to sell credits based on just solar; we would like to consider solar plus storage (by using batteries). So why not have a wish list of priority projects like that for adaptation as well, which could, of course, be modified by each State in the country? And with that, indicate certain types of models where finance can be 'blended' (partly funded by private and public sector)?



To listen to the full interview
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Issue Overview

Aspect	Detail
Core Concern	India's potential role in global climate leadership amid declining commitments from developed nations.
Geopolitical Context	COP30 occurs in a context of U.S. withdrawal from Paris Agreement, EU hesitancy, and Brazil emphasizing implementation; India is a major developing country with rising emissions and renewable capacity.

Aspect	Detail
India's Stand	Steady progress in renewable energy, ambitious targets for non-fossil electricity (50% by 2030), emphasis on green hydrogen, and ongoing adaptation measures.
Underlying Issue	Balancing domestic development needs with international climate commitments; securing finance and technology for mitigation and adaptation.

Key Observations

- **Climate Leadership Vacuum:** Developed nations' reluctance may offer India an opportunity to show a "steady hand" and credible implementation.
- **Mitigation Efforts:** Renewable energy now constitutes ~50% of installed capacity; decoupling of power sector growth from emissions.
- **Adaptation Focus:** Finance for agriculture, water resources, and climate-resilient infrastructure is crucial. Programs like PM-KUSUM (solar in agriculture) demonstrate dual mitigation-adaptation benefits.
- **Finance & Implementation:** Climate finance (~\$1.3 trillion annually by 2035) requires blended mechanisms involving public, private, multilateral, and philanthropic sources.
- **Industrial Emissions:** Hard-to-abate sectors (cement, steel) require innovative approaches and potential long-term NDC targets.
- **Strategic & Security Interests:** Climate action aligns with national strategic priorities, industrial growth, and economic opportunities (e.g., renewable energy investments by large conglomerates).

Static and Current Linkages

Static Topic	Current Relevance
India's NDC Commitments	Updated NDCs and National Adaptation Plan to be submitted at COP30.
Renewable Energy Development	Expansion of solar, wind, and green hydrogen to reduce emissions.
Climate Finance	Mobilizing both domestic and international resources for mitigation and adaptation.
Industrial Emissions Management	Targeting hard-to-abate sectors for long-term carbon reduction.
Global Climate Governance	India can assume a leadership role in shaping implementation-focused COP outcomes.

Analytical Perspective

- **Global Leadership Potential:** India's credibility stems from consistent domestic implementation, strategic autonomy, and growing renewable capacity.
- **Implementation COP:** Focus on "means of implementation" (finance, technology, capacity building) is as important as emissions targets.
- **Dual-Benefit Projects:** Programs combining mitigation and adaptation (e.g., solar-powered cold chains) enhance cost-effectiveness and scalability.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Climate action intersects with national development priorities, security, and industrial competitiveness.
- **Financing Innovations:** Blended finance, public-private partnerships, and carbon markets can accelerate both adaptation and mitigation investments.

Solutions and Policy Significance

- **Updated NDCs & NAP:** Include incremental targets like green hydrogen, industrial electrification, and priority adaptation projects.
- **Project Pipelines:** Create sectoral and state-level project lists for international and domestic investment.
- **Climate Finance Mobilization:** Leverage private investment, multilateral development banks, and philanthropic sources.
- **Technology & Skill Development:** Promote low-carbon industrial processes and renewable energy integration.
- **Strategic Signaling:** Demonstrate India's commitment to global climate leadership while balancing development priorities.

Strategic & Societal Implications

Aspect	Implication
National Development	Integrates climate action with industrial growth, energy security, and agriculture.
International Credibility	Positions India as a reliable partner in global climate negotiations.
Energy Transition	Accelerates adoption of renewables and low-carbon technologies.
Climate Resilience	Improves adaptation in agriculture, water management, and urban systems.
Finance & Investment	Opens avenues for green financing, technology transfer, and market creation.

Challenges Ahead

- Balancing development imperatives with emission reduction targets.
- Mobilizing adequate climate finance from global and domestic sources.
- Implementing mitigation in hard-to-abate sectors.
- Coordinating adaptation and mitigation across states and sectors.
- Managing international expectations without compromising national priorities.

Conclusion

India has an opportunity to demonstrate climate leadership by combining steady domestic implementation, innovative adaptation-finance models, and strategic industrial policies. By focusing on measurable NDCs, dual-benefit projects, and blended finance mechanisms, India can contribute meaningfully to COP30 while advancing its national development and energy transition goals. Strategic engagement also reinforces India's credibility in global climate governance amid uncertainty in developed nations.

Immunity of international organisations is no free pass

International cooperation between countries often leads to the creation of international organisations (IOs) to administer the treaties that states sign and ratify. These IOs, or Intergovernmental Organisations, may operate at the multilateral level, such as the United Nations (UN), or at the regional level, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

While the existence of these IOs is a fact of life, a question of contemporary relevance that has not attracted much attention is whether IOs are subject to the jurisdiction of the domestic courts of the host state where they are based, or whether they enjoy immunity from such jurisdiction. This question is particularly relevant for India as it is home to a number of IOs.

The immunities that different IOs enjoy differ. An IO's immunity is to be determined through a careful reading of the treaty establishing the IO, the headquarters agreement (an agreement between the IO and the host state), and the domestic legislation, if any, that created the IO. The theoretical basis for an IO's immunity from the jurisdiction of the host state's domestic courts is based on the 'functional necessity' thesis.

Accordingly, immunity to IOs is crucial to ensure that they can perform their functions smoothly. While this is generally true, the functional necessity thesis, as international lawyers such as Jan Klabbers point out, is not without its problems. For instance, what happens when an IO abuses its powers by acting in an arbitrary or discriminatory fashion? Can the IO still hide under the cloak of immunity in the name of functionality?

Judicial practice of other countries

In numerous countries, a typical case that their national courts have handled is whether they have jurisdiction to hear employment disputes between a staff member and the IO. In all such disputes, IOs have claimed immunity from the court's jurisdiction. If an IO wishes to claim



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The issue acquires relevance as India is home to a number of international organisations

immunity from domestic courts for employment disputes, it should provide an alternative mechanism to its staff to settle disputes that they may have with the organisation. The International Court of Justice, as early as 1954, in the *Effect of Awards Case*, upheld the creation of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, a body created by the UN, for the purpose of providing an orderly judicial mechanism to settle staff disputes.

Traditionally, courts in several jurisdictions have dismissed claims brought by staff members against an IO on the principle of functional immunity. However, more recently, as international lawyer August Reinisch demonstrates, national courts have begun to assess the 'human rights impact' of their immunity decisions. The critical question is whether the court's denial of jurisdiction to hear a claim brought against an IO by a staff member will render the petitioner without remedies. If yes, it would constitute a denial of justice.

Alternative remedy

Arguably, if an IO provides for an alternative dispute settlement mechanism for its staff members, the domestic court should deny jurisdiction, upholding the IO's immunity. However, a mere theoretical possibility of an alternative dispute settlement is not enough. As the Italian Supreme Court held in *Drago vs International Plant Genetic Resources Institute*, the alternative remedy should be an independent and impartial judicial remedy to settle staff disputes.

Likewise, a Belgian court in *Siedler vs Western European Union* abjured the IO's immunity because the alternative remedy did not promise a fair trial. In *Banque africaine de développement vs Degboe*, a French court rejected the immunity argument of the bank because no alternative remedy existed. The bank had created an alternative remedy after the petitioner's dismissal, which the

petitioner could not access. In short, what courts worldwide are increasingly assessing is not just the availability of the IOs' alternative dispute settlement but also its adequacy, judged by the principles of natural justice. To better understand this point, let us assume that the domestic legislation creating the IO or the headquarters agreement between the IO and the host state provides for arbitration as an alternative method to resolve employment-related disputes. Will this be sufficient for the IO to claim immunity from the domestic court's jurisdiction? The answer is no. The theoretical availability of arbitration is a starting point.

Vital questions

The key question is about what steps the IO has taken to effectively implement this alternative remedy. For example, has the IO established a precise mechanism for conducting arbitration to address employment disputes within its rules, regulations and by-laws? Has it appointed a panel of independent arbitrators? Has the IO been affiliated with any arbitral institution and adopted its rules? Moreover, has it expressly waived its immunity regarding the supervisory jurisdiction of domestic courts in the arbitration of employment disputes? If not, arbitration will not be an effective remedy.

In other words, has the IO taken steps to ensure that this alternative remedy provides reasonable and effective access to a dispute settlement mechanism that is fair for the adjudication of employment disputes? If the answer is no, the IO cannot reasonably claim immunity in employment disputes before domestic courts.

In sum, the immunity of IOs should be respected. Nonetheless, immunity should not become a licence for an IO to abuse public power, leading to grave injustice.

The views expressed are personal

GS. Paper 2— International Relations

UPSC Mains Practice Question: Examine the tension between the immunity of international organisations and principles of human rights and natural justice. Illustrate with examples from global judicial practice. (150 Words)

Context :

International organisations (IOs), created through treaties and intergovernmental cooperation, often enjoy immunity from the domestic courts of their host states to ensure smooth functioning. However, the extent and limits of such immunity, especially in cases of staff disputes or abuse of power, are of contemporary relevance for India, which hosts multiple IOs. The article emphasizes that immunity should not become a shield for arbitrariness or denial of justice.

Issue Overview

Aspect	Detail
Core Concern	Determining the scope and limitations of immunity of IOs from domestic court jurisdiction, especially in employment disputes.
Geopolitical Context	With India hosting regional and global IOs (like SAARC and UN offices), balancing functional immunity with accountability is critical in international law and domestic jurisprudence.
India’s Stand	India must respect IO immunities under treaties and headquarters agreements but ensure domestic access to justice where alternative remedies are inadequate.
Underlying Issue	Immunity of IOs must align with principles of natural justice, human rights, and effective dispute resolution.

Key Observations

- **Functional Necessity Thesis:** IO immunity is based on the idea that it is essential for performing its core functions without interference from host states.
- **Challenges to Immunity:** Arbitrary actions or abuse by IOs (e.g., discriminatory employment practices) can make absolute immunity problematic.
- **Judicial Practice Globally:** Courts in Italy, Belgium, and France have assessed whether alternative remedies for staff disputes are effective before upholding immunity. Mere theoretical mechanisms (like arbitration) are insufficient without proper implementation.
- **Human Rights Lens:** National courts increasingly weigh the adequacy of remedies against potential denial of justice.
- **Alternative Dispute Mechanisms:** Effective immunity requires independent, impartial, and accessible mechanisms to resolve internal disputes.

Static and Current Linkages

Static Topic	Current Relevance
International Law & IOs	Defines legal frameworks for immunity and accountability.
Human Rights & Access to Justice	Ensures protection against abuse of power by IOs.
Domestic Jurisdiction	Balancing treaty obligations with principles of natural justice in India.
Employment Law	IO staff disputes highlight gaps in remedy mechanisms.

Static Topic	Current Relevance
Global Governance	Enhances transparency and legitimacy of international organisations.

Analytical Perspective

- **Balancing Immunity and Accountability:** Immunity should protect operational independence but not prevent redress for wrongful actions.
- **Rule of Law:** Even international actors are subject to judicial scrutiny where internal remedies are inadequate.
- **India's Strategic Consideration:** Hosting IOs necessitates clear frameworks that respect both international obligations and domestic legal principles.
- **Judicial Precedents:** Cases like *Drago vs International Plant Genetic Resources Institute* and *Siedler vs Western European Union* illustrate courts' insistence on effective dispute resolution mechanisms.
- **Natural Justice Principle:** Immunity cannot override fairness and impartial adjudication in employment and administrative disputes.

Solutions and Policy Significance

- **Clear Frameworks:** IOs should establish and implement effective alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.
- **Legislative Guidelines:** India could set host-state regulations to ensure IO immunity aligns with access to justice.
- **Monitoring & Accountability:** Regular evaluation of IO grievance mechanisms to ensure compliance with fairness standards.
- **Awareness & Training:** Inform staff members about their rights and dispute resolution pathways.
- **International Cooperation:** Encourage treaties to include explicit provisions for alternative remedies without undermining IO autonomy.

Strategic & Societal Implications

Aspect	Implication
Rule of Law	Ensures IOs cannot act with impunity in host states.
Human Rights	Protects employees of IOs from denial of justice.
International Reputation	Upholds credibility and legitimacy of IOs.

Aspect		Implication
Domestic Oversight	Legal	Strengthens India's role in global governance by balancing sovereignty and treaty obligations.
Operational Integrity		Effective dispute mechanisms reinforce functional legitimacy of IOs.

Challenges Ahead

- Ensuring that alternative remedies are genuinely independent, impartial, and effective.
- Balancing India's treaty obligations with the protection of domestic legal rights.
- Avoiding conflicts between international functional immunity and domestic human rights norms.
- Addressing gaps in enforcement and monitoring of IOs' internal dispute mechanisms.
- Educating IOs and staff about procedural safeguards and rights.

Conclusion

While the immunity of international organisations is necessary for smooth functioning, it cannot serve as a blanket shield against abuse or denial of justice. India, as a host state, must uphold international obligations while ensuring that IO staff and other affected parties have access to fair and effective dispute resolution mechanisms. Immunity, therefore, is a responsibility, not a free pass.